

Focus Group Session One Notes

Highway 11 & Wisconsin Street Property Owners

November 29, 2004

Sturtevant Village Hall

Conducted by Planning Consultants, Barrientos Design & Consulting

1. WISCONSIN STREET OWNER'S COMMENTS

- Traffic flow is a primary issue.
- businesses.
- Closing the road (Wisconsin Street) will be very detrimental for local businesses
- Traffic is cutting through Renaissance Place instead.
- Took parking off east side of Wisconsin Street.
 - Cost the Village millions of dollars to move train station
 - No benefits to local businesses
 - Understanding is that there is no funding from Wisconsin Department of Transportation for overpass
 - Limited access to Wisconsin Street businesses with the Hwy 11 overpass
- Cutting off Wisconsin Street with the new train station on one end and an overpass at the other
- There has been a decline in traffic on Wisconsin Street
 - People avoid the area due to increased traffic flow on Hwy 11 (difficult to turn onto Hwy 11 from Wisconsin)
 - Stop light as a potential solution
 - DOT denied stoplight because it would be too close to the railroad tracks
- Have Wisconsin Street go through Overpass instead of a dead end at HWY 11 and create a frontage road.
 - If Hwy 11 overpass is built, Wisconsin Street should have a pass through to allow traffic to south side of Hwy 11.
 - A frontage road should be provided so vehicles can access Wisconsin from the Hwy 11.
- Can Village buy the CP Depot lot and convert into a nice parking lot.
- The train switching over Hwy 11 occurs frequently and blocks traffic from coming on to Wisconsin. Can CP Rail be contacted and requested to change their switching location?
- Lack of public transportation is a problem
 - No bus service after 6PM
 - No local taxi service
 - People coming off train or visiting by public transportation, have been stranded here.
- Need to revitalize Wisconsin Street
- When Hwy 11 was changed to 4 lanes (approximately 20 years ago) it changed the atmosphere of the Village. Switched town center function of Wisconsin Street to none at all.

- Emphasis shifted from Wisconsin to Durand
- Historically, Wisconsin Street had grocery stores, hotels, and Civic uses. It was the hub of Sturtevant traditionally.
- Would be nice to recreate a town center of Sturtevant.
- Train Depot has been an integral part of Sturtevant's and Wisconsin Street's identity.
- People move and stayed in Sturtevant because it was quaint place. Would like to keep that character.
- Library would be a nice addition to the area
- Gas station on Wisconsin Street would help.
- Video store would help.
- Antique store would be complementary use.
- Attract a grocery store and bring in some retail
- Owners of Historical buildings should preserve their character.
- Land use and visual mismatch along Wisconsin Street
 - 2-story building in the middle of a residential area
 - Mix of retail, industrial, commercial and residential uses
 - 10 minute parking in front of Post Office
 - Post Office users are parking in local business parking lots
- There is some pedestrian activity along Wisconsin.
 - Some of this traffic comes from the neighboring houses.
- No business is generated from Renaissance Place for Wisconsin Street businesses
 - The group saw little relationship of their corridor to Renaissance Place. The businesses there don't seem that involved in the community.
- Not as much car or truck traffic along Wisconsin as use to be.
- Cars speed through corridor and don't notice the businesses located along the street.
- Some business is generated from prison staff.
- Committee received grant funding for flower pots and placed along Durand Avenue.
 - Durand Avenue –most visible within community
 - Limited funding available and volunteers are running the program
 - Committee is working on funding for Wisconsin Street
- Additional façade improvements to buildings along Wisconsin, close to Hwy 11 would be beneficial
 - Seek to maintain or recreate historical character of street.
- Street could use more greenery/simple (low maintenance) landscaping
- Consistent lighting throughout the area needed.
 - Opportunity for historic character light poles and fixtures.
- Straighten out the current utility poles; they are bent over in random form.
- Run utility lines underground to clean up visual environment.
- Concerned about losing park near Charles Street
 - Understanding is that the 100-year dedication time period is almost up
 - Kids use park for various activities, including sledding
- No place for kids to bike or trail system for them and exercisers.
- Revise zoning along Wisconsin, it is a historical area

- Rezone- can't have mix of housing and commercial and industrial – need some consistency. That or the plan commission needs to carefully review what is approved.
- If there is damage to a building, building owners are caught with not being able to re-build what they have now.
- Poor amenities in existing parks
 - Some funding for North & South Parks for new benches, flower pots, etc.
- Create walkways connecting condos to Wisconsin Street businesses
- Wisconsin Street is going to end up residential
- No room for new businesses
 - Homes are being torn down to develop commercial
 - Business should go into existing buildings
- Preserve historical quality & buildings
- How Mount Pleasant develops Highway 20 will impact future of Sturtevant
- Provide public parking lot
- Consistent enforcement of zoning standards
 - For example, CP parcels are excluded from Village requirements

2. SUMMARY OF WISCONSIN ST OWNER'S PRIORITIES

1. Intersection of Wisconsin Street and Hwy 11/ Overpass
 - i. Concerns about impacts of proposed overpass on Wisconsin Street businesses
2. Train switching so close to Hwy 11
 - i. Push to Renaissance Place and the train station
 - ii. May adversely impact Stock Lumber
3. Create environment that is business and residential friendly through signage and landscaping
4. Develop/place a sign highlighting businesses on Wisconsin from Hwy 11
5. Zoning/further review of development requests
6. Moving train station to Renaissance Place will hurt Wisconsin Street
7. Lack of public transportation
8. Revitalize area – attract compatible businesses to area but keep separate from residential uses
9. Preserve historical character
10. Create a town center/ “traditional” downtown area

3. HIGHWAY 11/DURAND AVENUE PROPERTY OWNER'S COMMENTS

- West of RR, track needs a zoning change from Manufacturing to Commercial
- Rail switching backs up traffic. – change location of switching
- Concerned about future of the rail traffic.
- What are the incentives for growth of businesses? Need business magnet, incentives. Like a tax incentive or development incentive. Some feel business is not good.
- Traffic flow is good. But too fast and heavy- need to find a way to slow traffic at businesses.
- Easy access from 1-94 is good. Allows access to businesses outside Village such as IL and Kenosha
- Would like to get exciting new businesses located here. But also don't want to lose character of Village. Have some kind of a businesses magnet
- Customers like small, quaint town feel.
- Some don't want "Big Businesses" on corridor and prefer no change overall. Some prefer no change for area west of RR tracks.
- Need to define what kind of customers and visitors we want.
- Need more small shops and stores
- Durand is not Racine, need separate identity. Need separate character for the shops in Sturtevant
- House Insurance Lock- no insurance company would be willing to insure the housing because of the proposed zoning
- Some say don't change the zoning west of the railroad or change zoning to east. One idea that came up was to make most of the area a mixed use area.
- No problem with parking.
- Maybe the businesses need to get organized and put pressure on the village as a group like a business improvement district.
- Need to define edge of Village and Center. Could be through signage, gateways.
- Scale of the street is not pedestrian friendly or visually appealing. Need some sense of scale, gateways.
 - Light fixtures could be more characterful.
- Some like the downtown part of Kenosha others note that we are a village not a city like Kenosha.

- Annexed land from Mt. Pleasant needs a vision for use and growth.
- Challenge is that Highway 11 is under WisDOT control and railroad tracks are under Canadian Pacific control.
- Jobs and money are in northern Illinois.
- On-line review of information and of this study can be reviewed at www.sturtevant-wi.gov
- Zoning ordinances have changed over time and need reviewing.
 - West of tracks it is Industrial
 - East of Tracks it is Business
- Overpass and its construction will have a negative impact on businesses. Maybe the overpass needs to be an underpass Concerned about temporary closures that will lead to permanent closures – the effect of the overpass is one of the biggest issues
- If this is an overpass, will need to address way finding from north to south travel.
- What in the schedule for the Overpass final design and construction.
- People feel safe in Sturtevant.
- The village needs to make their mind of what they are going to do with the zoning and not to change every 3 years
- Why can't Village wait with the zoning change until Corridor study is done?
- Would be good to slow traffic down for pedestrians.
 - Provide turning lanes for more traffic control
- Utility poles are unsightly, look into burying them.
- Improve approval process, make it streamlined and easier to use.
- Use a website to track approvals.

4. SUMMARY OF WISCONSIN ST OWNER'S PRIORITIES

1. Effect of Overpass on businesses
2. Zoning Changes for both west and east ends.
3. Zoning approval process
4. Web-site based information and approval process.
5. Keeping visual cohesion and orientation with Overpass

6. Keeping a quaint town feel.
7. Attract new businesses